

## Concept Note

### Workshop on ‘Depression in Children and Young Persons Living in Alternative Care: Challenges and Possibilities’

September 1, 2017

Institute of Human Behaviour & Allied Sciences (IBHAS),  
G.T.B, Hospital Road, Dilshad Garden, New Delhi

#### Background

With the adoption of the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) and recent efforts by global actors such as World Health Organizations (WHO), mental health is emerging at the international level as an important aspect of holistic human development.

In the light of the SDGs and WHO declaring depression as a key issue for concern in 2017, the focus on mental health and well-being in human beings, especially children and young person is back. Overall mental health programming and policy for children is even far critical as childhood is a stage of development in which the reciprocal emotional bonding between child and his/her caregiver leaves an impact for the while life of the adult. In India, depression is common: nearly 1 in 40 and 1 in 20 suffer from past and current depression, respectively<sup>1</sup>. **For children living in difficult circumstances and with vulnerability require far greater attention.** Such children are therefore are at **risk of growing up with unresolved negative emotions which are often expressed with anger and depression in adult life.**<sup>2</sup> For example, children who experience early deprivation and neglect from death of parents, or having experienced abandonment by own families or abused and exploited by adults have more significantly increased risks of being mentally weak and suffer from a range of psychiatric disorders like emotional and behaviour disorder and depression is very common in such children<sup>3</sup>. Depression at its worst can lead to suicide. Over 8 lakh people died by suicide only in 2015 and globally, this was the 2<sup>nd</sup> largest cause of death for 15 to 29 years old. Most depression in adults often begins in adolescence.<sup>4</sup> And more significantly, nearly 50% of people affected by depression don't get any

We need a ‘*sea change in mental health care around the world, urging States and psychiatrists to act with courage to reform a crisis-hit system built on outdated attitudes*’

Dainius Pûras, United Nations  
Special Rapporteur on right to  
health

<sup>1</sup> National Mental Health Survey, 2015-16

<sup>2</sup> Asfawesen S, Aregay A, Berhe H. Prevalence of psychological distress and associated factors among AIDS orphan adolescents in Mekelle City, Tigray, Northern Ethiopia: cross sectional study greener. J Med Sci. 2013;3(7):260-9.

<sup>3</sup> Cicchetti D, Barnett D. Attachment organization in maltreated preschoolers. Developmental Psychopath. 1991;4:397-411. And also Anna T, Smyke. Attachment disturbances in young children the continuum of caretaking causality. J Am Academy Child Adol Psych. 2002;41(8):972- 82.

<sup>4</sup> Indian Paediatrics, Depressive Disorders in Child and Adolescent Population, 2001

kind of treatment. This is largely due to low levels of recognition, stigma and lack of access to care. Often, it gets misdiagnosed.

### **About the workshop**

In the light of the above information, it is undisputed that depression is common in children and young persons living in Alternative Care and has serious consequences for life. So as caregivers we need to ask and know as to what are the basic interventions and strategies that we must adopt to reduce the risks. What is the effective care based approach that can and must be adapted while caring for children living in Alternative Care? How critical is it to understand the consequences and lifetime impact of not giving the required support and encouragement to children to express their emotions and guide them to deal with them? How can caregivers enhance the emotional support that such children need constantly during the continuum of care? What are some of the best care models that one can look up-to and learn from? How can early diagnosis and timely intervention help reduce the burden of depression in children and ameliorate their sufferings and improve the quality of their lives while living in Alternative Care?

This one day workshop is an attempt to seek answers to the questions above. The workshop examines specific issues of depression in children and young person in the care **settings of children living in Alternative Care such as the juvenile justice enforcement system, child care homes, foster families, adoption and related service facilities.** It also looks at the mental health concerns of caregivers and levels of depression in them and develop an understanding of early and timely interventions for children, adolescents and caregivers. Recognizing the importance of the subject, the academic journal of Udayan Care, **ICEB: Institutionalized Children: Explorations and Beyond**, decided to publish a special and peer reviewed edition for the September issue focusing on depression in children and young persons living in Alternative Care. This eighth issue of the journal will be launched at the workshop.

**Partner:** This workshop is being held at IBHAS and with technical and knowledge support of IBHAS.

**Date** – 1<sup>st</sup> September 2017 (full day)

### **Participants in the Workshop**

Social workers, Volunteers, Members of the Juvenile Justice System such as CWCs and DCPUs, counsellor, Psychologists, psychiatrists, members of civil society.

The **Organising Committee** for the Workshop shall comprise of Dr. Kiran Modi, Dr. Monisha Nayar-Akhtar, Dr. Nimersh Desai, Mr Arun Talwar and Ms Leena Prasad.

### **Key Objectives**

- Initiate discussion and dialogue on importance of **early and timely recognition, diagnoses and intervention** on depression in children and young persons
- Identifying the **suicidal tendencies** in children and young persons living in Alternative Care and ways of addressing them
- Understanding **challenges faced by Caregivers** and service providers, their mental health conditions, issues of burnouts and effective ways of addressing such issues.